Numb. 82.

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *Britiſh* Trade, &c.

From Saturday, November 28. to Tueſday, December 1. 1713.

A Letter to the Mercator; *proving, that to offer any Scheme of the* French *Trade from the Cuſtom-houſe Books, is an Errant piece of Knavery to Cheat and Amuſe the Nation.*

To the Publiſhers of the *MERCATOR.*

'THE Rudeneſs, with which the pretended Anſwerers of the *MERCATOR* treat thoſe, whom they find convenient to call the Author or Authors of that uſeful Paper, makes their Writings the publick Nuſance of the Town, the Shame of the Britiſh Nation, and the Diſdain and Contempt of all, but ſuch of their own Party, who make it their Practice to uſe the greateſt Perſons in the Nations in the ſame manner, or worſe, the Queen Herſelf not excepted; and you may very well Anſwer all thoſe Scurrilities, as the late famous Lord *Rochester* Anſwered a fooliſh Ignorant Cenſurer of his Works.

. . . . . .

If Sackvill, Savil, Buckhurſt, Wytcherly,
And ſome few more, whom I omit to Name,
Approve my Senſe, I count your Cenſure FAME.
Roch. *Poems.*

'The *MERCATOR* has the Approbation of Wiſe, Honeſt and Impartial Men; and the Clamours of a Railing, Envenom'd, Enraged Sett of Furies, do but confirm them in that Approbation. The Schemes of thoſe People have been detected of innumerable Frauds, ſuch as no Honeſt Men could be capable of publiſhing; and it cannot well be expected, but they, who have the Face firſt to put ſuch things upon the World, will afterwards uſe all manner of Violence and Injuſtice to ſupport them. How could it be expected, but a Sett of Men, who could, without Bluſhing, offer their old Scheme, which had Deluded the Nation ſo long before, I ſay, who would doubt but they, who would offer ſuch a thing to the *Houſe of Commons*, for a true Account of the Exportations to France, in which was not a word of all our foreign Re-exported Goods, or of our Plantation Goods, would raiſe up ſome Mercenary, to carry on their Cheats with the ſame degree of Fraud and Legerdemain: And when they are Detected and Expoſed in theſe things, it cannot be expected, but they ſhould be in the greateſt Rage in the World. But it is certain, that the more ill Names, and the more foul Language they give, ſo much weight they take off from what they ſay. Will Railing prove, that the Wine and Brandy coſt from 17 l. to 20 l. per Ton in France, in the Year 1685? Will calling ill Names prove, that there are not great Quantities of Engliſh Woollen Manufactures ſent every Year to France thro' other Countries? Let them diſcuſs the general Head, before they make ſuch a Noiſe with the Particulars; and when they will anſwer the Two following Heads, I will take effectual Care to prove for you, where they have aſſerted moſt notorious Falſhoods, in no leſs than Forty places, in their Schemes and Anſwers to your *MERCATORS:* But before there can be any manner of occaſion for that, be pleaſed to let them ſettle theſe Two Preliminaries, without which, all they can ſay to the Particulars are of no more Signification to the Queſtion in hand, than a Story of *Robin Hood* and *Little John*; nor any more to the purpoſe than *Don Quixot*'s Knight-Errantry, with the Barber's Baſon on his Head for a Helmet, and running Tilt at the Windmill inſtead of a Giant. The Two Heads are theſe:

'1. No Accounts from the Cuſtom-houſe can give a true Scheme of the Trade to France, or ſo much of a Scheme, as to make a rational Conjecture from.

'2. No Eſtimate of the Trade to France, as it ſhall be after the new Treaty takes place, can be juſt, but what is taken from the Time, when that Trade was in the ſame Circumſtances, which it is to be reduced to by the Treaty. If theſe Two Preliminaries want Explanation, take it briefly as follows:

'1. No Accounts from the Cuſtom-houſe can give a true Scheme of the Trade to France, or ſo much of a Scheme, as to make a rational Conjecture from.

'The Caſe in few Words is this: All the Goods brought in from France are Entred as from France; but no Man can gueſs, how many of thoſe Goods, which are Entred out to other Countries, are carried to France.

'You have already mentioned the Entring Goods in general Heads for Flanders and the Streights, of which I ſhall give you a ſhort additional Hint. There have been, within a few Months, no leſs than 17 Ships from England, who have come to an Anchor at Marſeilles, and delivered Engliſh Goods there; as I have by a particular Account from my Correſpondent there; beſides Ships with Fiſh: Now if you pleaſe to examine the Cuſtom-houſe at London, you will hardly find above One Ship cleared out thither: If you do that, I demand of theſe experienced Merchants, as they call themſelves, where all the Goods, they carried, were

'Shipped,

'shipped, and for what Places they were Entred; or 'whether they think 37 English Merchant-Ships to the 'Streights, for they are not the least Ships, which go 'thither, went up the Gulph, to shew the People of 'Marseilles, that we had Ships, or that we knew the 'way thither. On the contrary, you may assure your self, 'those Ships have Landed prodigious Quantities of 'Sugar, Tobacco, Cotton, East-India Goods, Hemp, 'and also a very great Quantity of English Woollen 'Manufactures; and particularly my Friend writes 'me word, that at several times there has been brought 'in there the Two following Articles:

1600 Fodder of Lead and Shot,
2000 Bags of Pepper.

'I do not say, these Ships were all full loaden for the 'Port of Marseilles; but we will know, they will not 'go so much out of their way, unless they have a Quan'tity of Goods sufficient to make it worth their while; 'so that the Quantity of the whole must be very consi'derable. I'll allow also, that perhaps some of these 'Ships were loaden with Corn; but all this will not 'alter the Case.

'To these Accounts, you must give me leave to add, 'what I have from very good hands; (viz.) That the 'French in the Straights have taken of us near 20,000 'Barrels of Red Herrings.

'It is certain, we see now great Quantities of Red 'Herrings Entred every day in the Port of London 'for the Straights, and that by French Merchants, whose 'principal Trade is known to be to France; and the 'like of Lead.

'If these Things are so, and no one can dispute them, 'I would then demand of these Men, what Guess can 'be made of the Trade to France by the Custom-house 'Entries?

'Next to this, is the Article, which you mentioned for'merly, and to which nothing has been replied, or in'deed can be worth Notice; (viz.) That the North 'Parts of France, fronting Germany, are, and cannot 'be otherwise, supplied with all our Manufactures by 'way of Holland and Flanders.

'What is more evident than this! The Trade to 'Holland is all of this kind; the Dutch do not con'sume the sixteenth part of the Manufactures, which they 'Import from us, but convey them by the Rivers, 'which falling into the Sea in Holland, make them the 'Sea-Port, as it were, to all the Countries they flow 'from; these are the Meuse, the Rhine, the Mosselle.

'The first and the last take their Beginning in France, 'and by them all those Parts of France, through which 'they run, after they are Navigable, are supplied with 'English Merchandizes and Manufactures; and this in 'England is called the Trade to Holland: whereas the 'Dutch are the Carriers indeed, but the French are the 'Consumers; and all that Consumption is and ought 'to be esteemed the French Trade.

'The like is to be said of Flanders and of St. Seba'stian's in Spain, the Particulars of which are touch'd 'at already in your *MERCATOR*; but all these 'prove the Principle laid down, (viz.) That no true 'Scheme of the Trade can be given by the Custom-'house: And as the Enemies of the *MERCATOR* 'knew this very well, you may see with what Eager'ness they join'd Issue and drew Schemes, when indeed 'it is all a Trick, a Juggle, to bubble and cheat a de'luded Nation, and make them take a glittering Bauble 'for true Gold, and make the Trade appear with a Face 'different from what it ought to wear.

2. 'The second Head is the same of which I find, since 'this was written, some other Hand has given you no'tice. The Truth is, there never was so gross a Wheedle palm'd upon a Nation; such a Cheat was never 'put in Print before: You may defy *Lazarillo de Tor'mes*, or the whole History of the English Rogue, to 'shew you so gross, so insolent a Fraud; much more 'considering, that this is offered to trick a whole Na'tion, to cheat a Parliament, and deceive the innocent 'Manufacturers into Riots and tumultuous Addresses 'against the publick Good of their own Trade.

'To bring a Scheme of the Trade for the Year 1685, 'after the French had charg'd our Manufactures with 'double Duties to lessen their Consumption, this is such 'a Cheat, as ought to be written in Capital Letters, 'with the Names of all those, who are not asham'd to 'own it, that their Country might know them, and 'know how to Resent it.

'The first Scheme was a Cheat in the Progress and 'Particulars, but this is a whole United Cheat in the 'very Contrivance, born a Cheat, designed to deceive 'the World: The Authors of the old Scheme shew'd 'Knavery in Management, but this is a piece of Falshood 'in the very Original, a Cheat in Bulk, a wholesale 'piece of Deceit, and the Author ought to be stigma'tiz'd with the Character of an Abstracted Deceiver.

'The very making the Scheme it self, abstracted 'from all its subsequent Irruptions, is a Cheat, for no 'Scheme of that Year can Lye in this Case, nor of any 'other Year, from the Custom-house Books only; and 'you are exceedingly to blame if you take any Notice of 'them for that reason; for, they neither can give us 'any guess, what the Trade was, or what it will be.

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